

Site M:26/11/6

"B.R." Stone and Jefferson Street Stone

Vinson Street and south side of Jefferson Street

Date: 1803

Public Access

When the Town of Rockville was surveyed in 1803, the "B.R." stone was planted on lot #1 to mark "The Beginning of Rockville". Other unmarked stones were planted at the four corners of the town limits. These stones were long forgotten, but in 1959 the "B.R." stone was unearthed. In 1961 the stone was suitably marked and rededicated by the Mayor and City Council on its original site. The Jefferson Street stone lies between the Rockville Academy and the Prettyman House at the 1803 western boundary of Rockville.

# Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

Survey No. M: 26/11/6

Magi No. 1651155315

DOE    yes    no

## 1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic "B. R. Stone" and Jefferson Street stoneand/or common   

## 2. Location

street & number Adjacent to sidewalks on Vinson Street  
and West Jefferson Street    not for publicationcity, town Rockville    vicinity of    congressional district 8state Maryland county Montgomery

## 3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<u>  </u> district	<u>  </u> public	<u>  </u> occupied	<u>  </u> agriculture <u>  </u> museum
<u>  </u> building(s)	<u>  </u> private	<u>  </u> unoccupied	<u>  </u> commercial <u>  </u> park
<u>  </u> structure	<u>  </u> both	<u>  </u> work in progress	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <u>  </u> educational <u>  </u> private residence
<u>  </u> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<u>  </u> entertainment <u>  </u> religious
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <u>  </u> object(s)	<u>  </u> in process	<u>  </u> yes: restricted	<u>  </u> government <u>  </u> scientific
	<u>  </u> being considered	<u>  </u> yes: unrestricted	<u>  </u> industrial <u>  </u> transportation
	<u>  </u> not applicable	<u>  </u> no	<u>  </u> military <u>  </u> other:

## 4. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name B.R. Stone - Montgomery County Government Jeff. St. Stone -  
101 Monroe Street on property line betw.  
Rockville, Md. 20850 John R. Law/RVI Methodist  
street & number    telephone no.: Church

city, town Rockville state and zip code Maryland 20850

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Montgomery County Land Records liber L  
street & number Montgomery County Courthouse folio 188  
city, town Rockville state Maryland

## 6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title Nonedate    federal    state    county    local   pository for survey records   city, town    state

# 7. Description

Survey No. M: 26/11/6

## Condition

☐ excellent  
☒ good  
☐ fair

☐ deteriorated  
☐ ruins  
☐ unexposed

## Check one

☒ unaltered  
☐ altered

## Check one

☐ original site  
☒ moved date of move 1961  
(B.R. Stone)

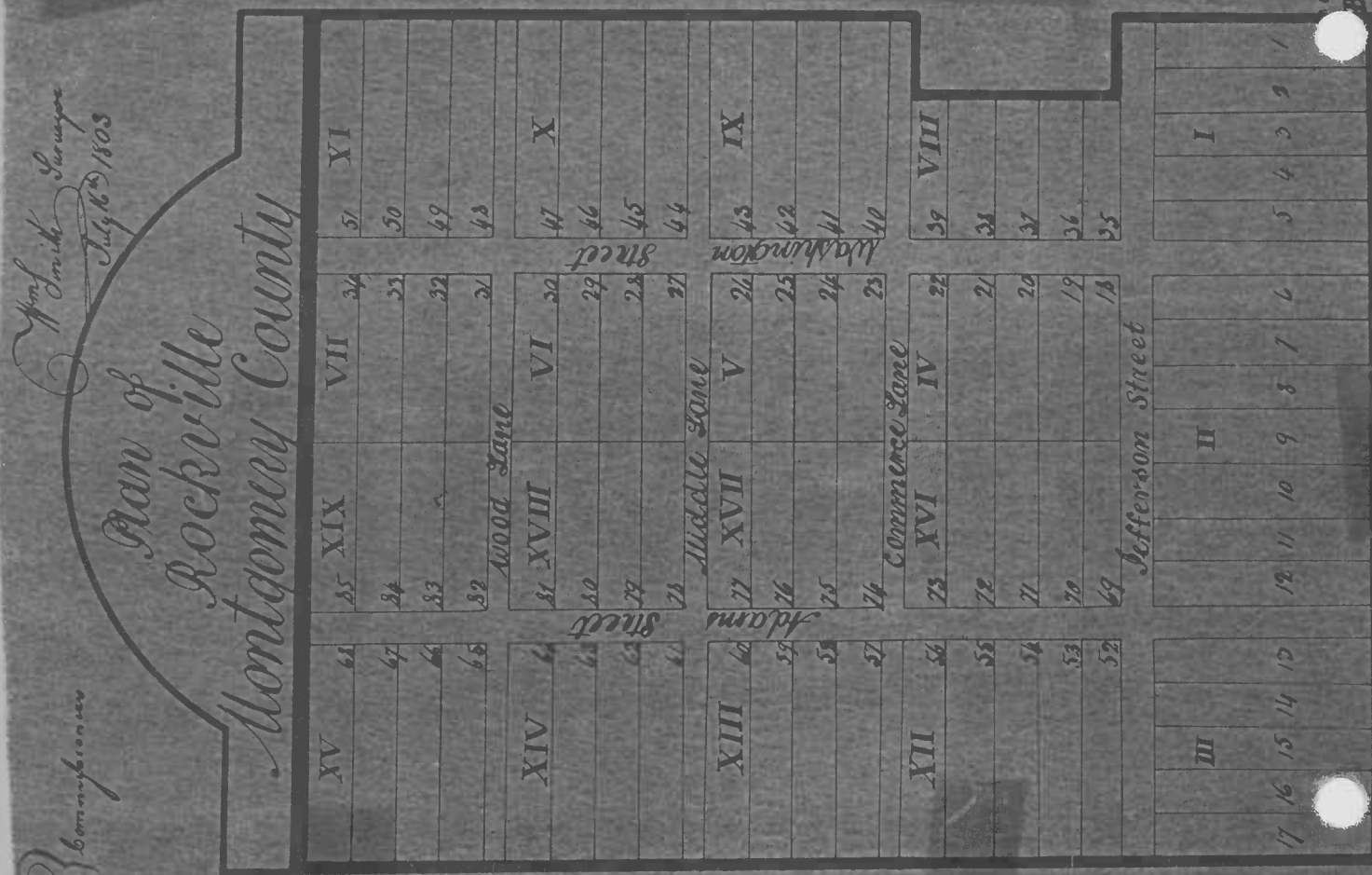
Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

Two of the original 1803 boundary stones have been located to date. They are both local stones, from the western section of the Wissahickon formation, and date from the late pre-Cambrian into the Ordovician period (probably 550 to 600 million years ago).

The larger, and more important, marker is the B.R. stone. It is located near the sidewalk on Vinson Street, near its intersection with Maryland Avenue. This stone is of chorite schist with granitized metasedimentary sandstone (quartz-rich sandstone altered into granite). The "B.R." is faint but legible. There is a brass explanatory plaque in the ground nearby.

The second stone is located on the south side of realigned West Jefferson Street, at the line dividing the Rockville Academy and "Prettyman house" properties (26/10/2 and 26/10/3). It is composed of granitized metasedimentary sandstone.

Liber L188



## 8. Significance

Survey No. M: 26/11/6

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1803

Builder/Architect

check: Applicable Criteria: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D  
and/or

Applicable Exception: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Level of Significance: ☐ national ☒ state ☒ local

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

The "B.R. Stone" is a rock engraved with the letters "B.R." to mark the Beginning of Rockville. It was planted at the southeast corner of Lot Number 1 in the 1803 survey which laid out the Town. For many years, it was neglected, half-buried in the tangled weeds of an undeveloped lot. Since 1961, it has been suitably marked and permanently displayed near the entrance of the Rockville Public Library (which is located on Lot 1). It is an everyday reminder of the modest beginnings of Rockville.

The Town of Rockville came into being on the heels of several previous identities: the town was first known by the name of the local tavern owner, then "Montgomery Court-House" on maps of the period.<sup>1</sup> In 1784, William P. Williams, who owned 200+ acres of the land, including "one framed courthouse", laid out streets and lots for his new town, which he called "Williamsburgh". The lots Williams sold were clustered around the Courthouse and the crossroads which he named First Street and West Street.<sup>2</sup>

By 1798, there were 29 buildings in the village on whole or partial lots, each lot being  $\frac{1}{2}$  acre, but Williams still owned 38 unimproved lots.<sup>3</sup> In November 1801, an Act was passed to lay out a Town in Montgomery County "In which a Commission be appointed to make out exact plot and limit extent of lots, streets and lanes most agreeable to their original location according to the best evidence that can be obtained". The Act recited that this "...was necessary because since lots have been purchased and considerable improvements made, there being no record of the same, the titles are precarious and uncertain... Town to be called Rockville."<sup>4</sup>

In November 1802, it was necessary to appoint another Commission for laying out the Town of Rockville since the first had "neglected to perform their duties." This Commission was successful and reported that it had numbered the said lots agreeable to the original plan. The Land Records of the County record this survey at Liber L, folio 172 et seq. The recitation of the survey begins as a stone planted to mark the "Beginning of Rockville". A copy of the survey plat is contained in Land Records at Liber L, folio 188 (copy attached). As far as can be determined, the lot numbers of the 84 lots correspond with Williams' numbering system. Six streets were platted, three named after the first Presidents; it is not known how many streets were in Williamsburgh. The B. R. stone was planted at the southeast boundary of the town limits, this also being the southeast corner of Lot 1.

The survey done by William Smith, Surveyor, also planted smaller stones at other boundaries of the town. Additional stone markers were set out to outline improved lots that had not already been marked by their owners. It was possible during the 19th century,

Continued on page 8.1

Statement of Significance - "B.R. Stone" and Jefferson Street stone, Rockville, MD  
(continued)

therefore, to have stones serving as survey bounds that were marked several different ways; e.g. Roman numerals, Arabic numbers, or owners' initials. One of these is evident at the end of lot 17, on Jefferson Street at the northwest corner of the Rockville Academy lot.

The hamlet of Rockville grew slowly; the population at the time of the Civil War did not yet number 400 people. But the coming of the railroad, leading to the town's popularity as a summer resort and then a desirable suburban address, the two World Wars and the "baby boom" all contributed to making Rockville the second largest incorporated city in Maryland. Additions and annexations by the City far outgrew the "B.R" Stone.

The need for newer City and County facilities arose in the mid-20th century. It is believed a paving crew clearing lot 1 for a new parking lot came upon the stone, dug it up and tossed it aside. One newspaper in 1958 covered the story of its "finding" amid the weeds behind the old Vinson house on lot 1.<sup>5</sup> Possibly it was never really "lost", but rather unrecognized because the southern half of lot 1 had never been a desirable location to build, being directly opposite the County jail.

Several proposals were introduced as to what to do with the stone, including suggestions to incorporate it in the new pavilion then building at the Rockville Civic Center on Baltimore Road. No decision was reached and the stone was put aside in the old Vinson house for "safekeeping" where it lay for two years.<sup>6</sup>

In 1961, the Mayor and City Council voted to return the stone to its proper and historic location as the first boundary of the town. The stone was embellished with a bronze plaque identifying its significance and dedicated to the citizens of Rockville past and present. It remains on the site, at the end of Lot 1, just a few feet north of the present Vinson Street.

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FOOTNOTES:

1. Early roads in the County were laid out "From Lawrence Owens" or in 1777 "From Leonard Davis". Davis was the successor as tavern keeper after Charles Hungerford on lot 19 owned by his father-in-law Joseph Wilson. Davis was paid 24 pounds in 1778 "To find a house to hold the Court in and a prison for the reception of prisoners". (March 1778 Levy List for March term of Court).
2. The land for the first Courthouse was surveyed in 1787, and adjoining lots condemned in 1788. The deeds for the Courthouse took parts of lots 34-39, which were already built upon; in these deeds Williams' First Street and West Lane are mentioned.
3. Tax Assessment "Houses and Lots in Williamsburgh 1793-1801". The total value of all houses and lots in Williamsburgh in 1801 was 7,790.1.8.
4. November 1801 Court Records.
5. Montgomery County Sentinel, July 31, 1958 and May 19, 1960.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Survey No. M: 26/11/6

General histories of Rockville and Montgomery County  
Montgomery County Sentinel  
Assessment and Court Records of Montgomery County

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property N.A.

Quadrangle name \_\_\_\_\_

Quadrangle scale \_\_\_\_\_

UTM References do NOT complete UTM references

A 

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Zone Easting Northing

B 

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Zone Easting Northing

C 

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D 

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E 

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F 

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G 

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H 

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### Verbal boundary description and justification

B.R. Stone: southeast corner of Lot 1, original Town of Rockville  
Jefferson Street stone: northwest corner of Lot 17, original Town of Rvl.

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
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state	code	county	code
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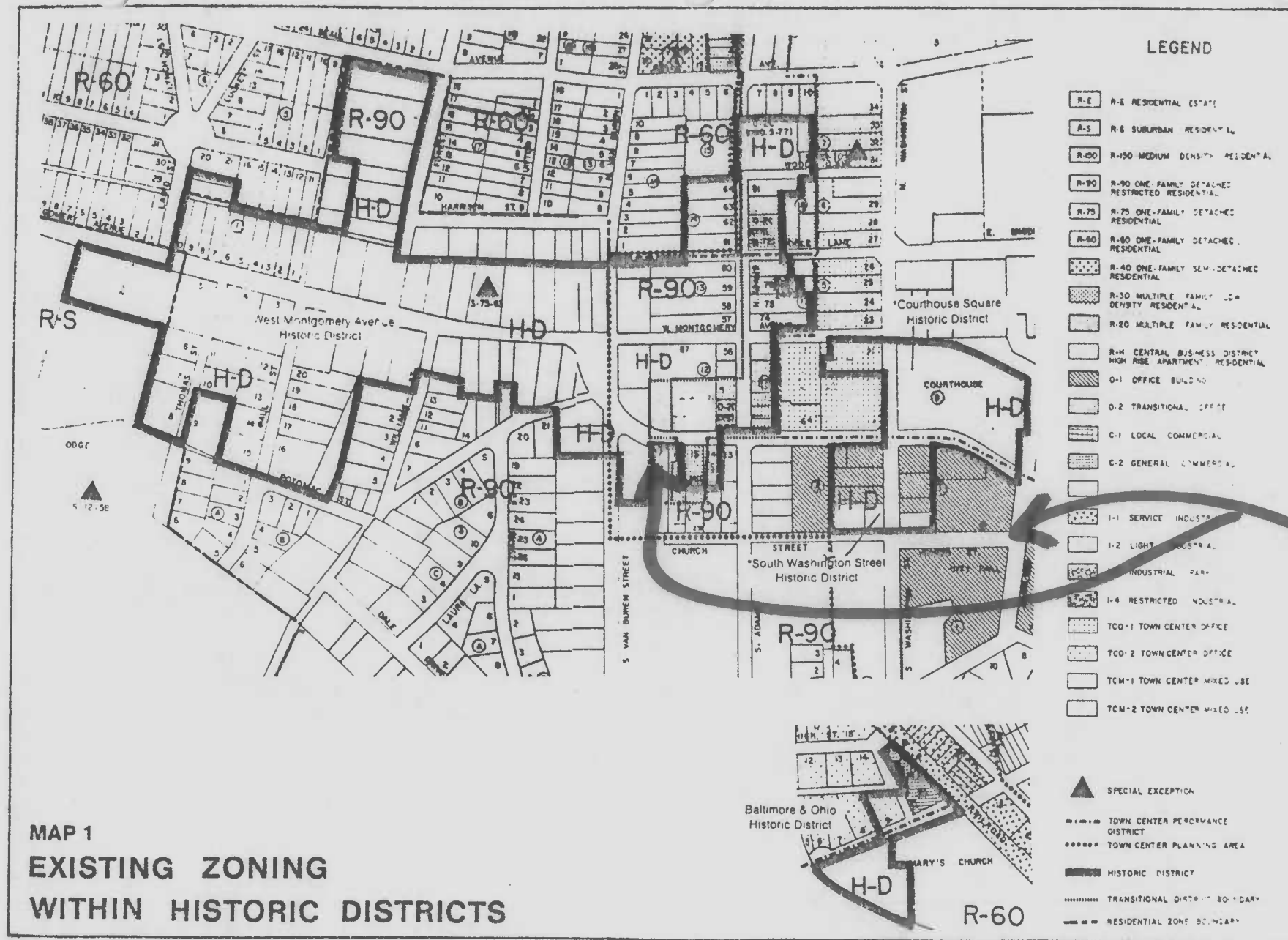
## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Anne W. Cissel/Eileen McGuckian/Henry Brunsorganization Peerless Rockville date September 1984street & number P.O. Box 4262 telephone 762-0096city or town Rockville state Maryland 20850


The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by  
an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated  
Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and  
record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of  
individual property rights.

return to: Maryland Historical Trust  
Shaw House  
21 State Circle  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
(301) 269-2438



\*Note: For discussion and planning purposes South Washington Street and the Courthouse Square district are considered independent Historic Districts even though they are shown on the existing zoning map as one district.



THIS STONE, DATED 1603  
AND LOCATED ON THIS SITE,  
MARKED THE SOUTHEAST CORNER  
OF THE  
ORIGINAL TOWN OF ROCKVILLE.  
THE LETTERS "L. R." ON ITS FACE  
STAND FOR  
"BEGINNING OF ROCKVILLE"

DEDICATED BY  
THE BOARD AND COUNCIL OF ROCKVILLE  
1966

M: 26/11/6

1016-5-7-4

RICHARD H. ANDREWS  
1608 Farragut Avenue  
Rockville, Maryland 20851

AUGUST, 1984

B.R. Stone  
VINSON STREET

FACE of STONE  
SOUTH SIDE -